

THE QUESTORS THEATRE

is based in West London where it has its own premises including a modern, flexible Playhouse, a Studio theatre, three rehearsal rooms, a workshop, an extensive wardrobe department and, of course, the Grapevine Bar, which is the hub of the theatre.

It has nearly 3,000 members, all of whom get involved in one way or another, either in the 20 plus productions that are staged each year, in the day to day running of the theatre, or as members of the audience.

As well as presenting a wide variety of plays, the Questors runs a two-year course for actors, plays host to visiting companies from home and abroad, mounts regular art exhibitions, runs workshops and clubs for young people and tours productions in this country and abroad.

In short, there is something for everyone at The Questors.

The Questors Theatre

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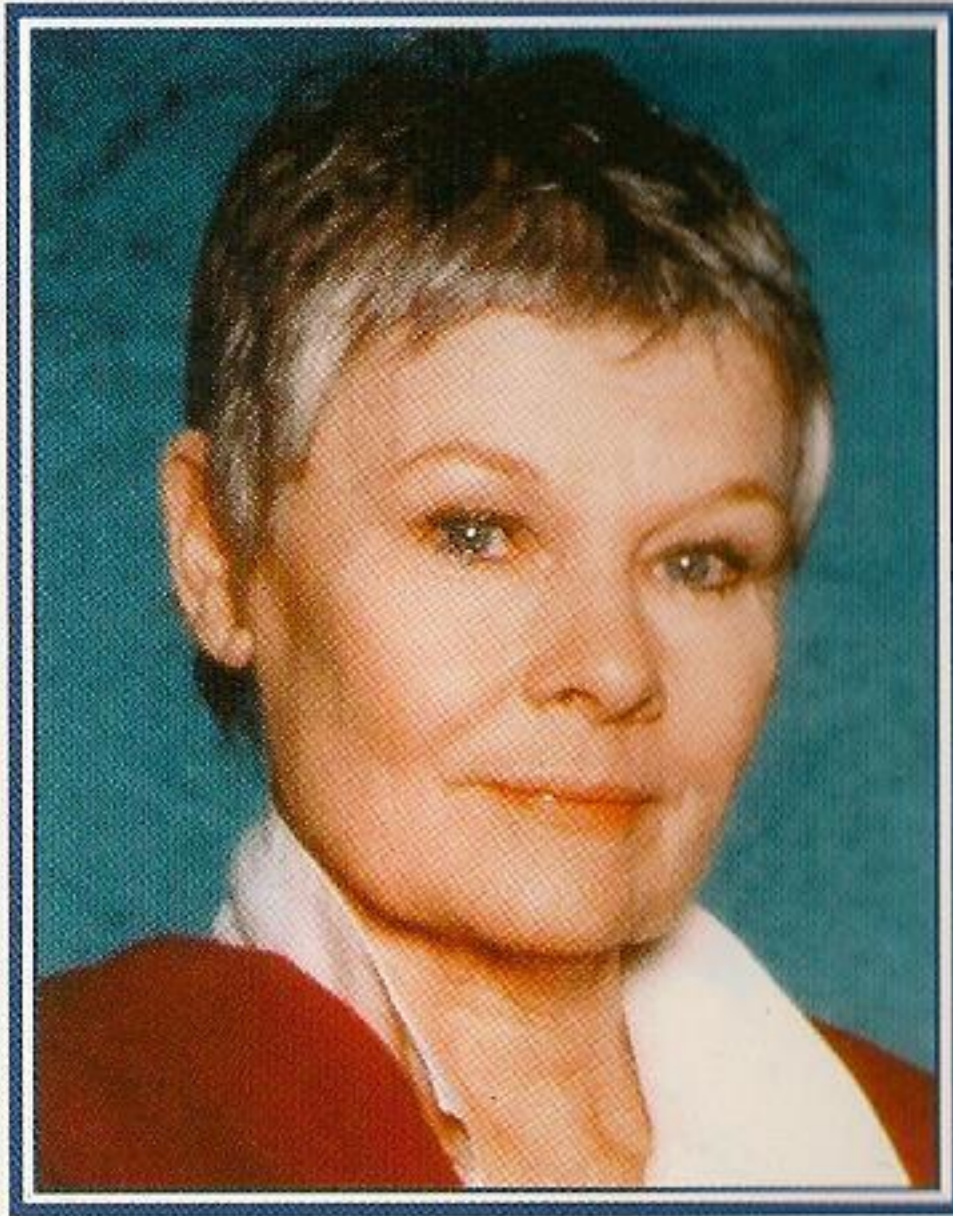
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HAPPY DAYS

THE QUESTORS THEATRE



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Welcome to The Questors Theatre, one of London's best kept secrets - except to its 3,000 members. How do I know about the Questors? I am proud to have been their President for over 16 years. Founded in 1929, it has since grown into the largest community theatre in Europe with a reputation for the highest standards, not only in acting but in direction and design as well. Luckily, with so many members, we have a wealth of talent to call on for all aspects of production and members are encouraged to be as actively involved as they would like. Alternatively, they simply enjoy the social side of the club, including the friendly Grapevine Bar (one of the many perks of membership) and the many and varied shows in our newly refurbished 350 seater Playhouse Theatre and more intimate Studio Theatre.

The Questors runs a professionally recognised two-year acting course in conjunction with Kingston College. There are also acting courses for beginners, free backstage training courses, visiting companies from home and abroad, regular art exhibitions, and workshops and clubs for young people. In short, there is something for everyone and with annual membership costing as little as £23.50 (including up to 10 free shows) it's great value for money as well.

But don't just take my word for it, the next time you're in West London call into The Grapevine Bar on any Wednesday evening at 8pm for a free tour of the theatre and a drink on us!

Worth looking into?

Definitely!

Dame Judi Dench
 President of The Questors Theatre



HAPPY DAYS

by Samuel Beckett

"What does it mean? he says - what's it supposed to mean? And so on - lot more stuff like that - usual drivel"

When Winnie quotes Mr Shower (or Cooker), saying "What does it mean ...what's it supposed to mean?", Beckett is having a joke at our (the audience's) expense; Mrs Shower (or Cooker) retorts with "What are *you* meant to mean?" An intellectual understanding of the play isn't necessary. The greatest Beckett actors are often quoted as saying that they don't "understand" what he's written but have an instinctive feel for what he's getting at.

However, it may help to say a little about the themes and theatrical language of HAPPY DAYS. For me, the main subject is the delusional nature of human thought. Winnie thinks she's going to float up into the blue when really she's being dragged down into the mud. Her greatest delusion is her irrepressible optimism - she has nothing to be optimistic about but, because of Beckett's compassion, we can see her misapplied positive thinking as tragic rather than something to be despised.

Other themes include death and degeneration, permanence and change, marital and sexual relations, routine and time, objects and words, memory and ageing.

As in all his plays, Beckett isn't interested in psychology or social conditions but asks the question "what is a human being?" at the most basic level. What are we? An organism with (at least) 5 senses and some ability to analyse the world around us. This ability is very limited, though, and while we like to think of ourselves as terribly clever and advanced, like Winnie, we constantly misinterpret our conditions. This is partly because we tend to confine ourselves to a merely conceptual view of the world - and are always asking questions like Mr Shower's (or Cooker's).

Beckett's use of language is like music - as in a Beethoven symphony, the basic themes are stated, restated and varied over and over again. This isn't confined to words or sounds but applies also to the intricate and incredibly precise movements that Beckett demands of the actors. The play has been described as a "sonata for words and movement".

The play is also "a network of classical quotations", half-remembered (or half-forgotten depending on how you look at it) by Winnie. These include quotes from Shakespeare, Browning, Keats, Milton, Gray and Yeats.

A million things could be (and have been) said about Beckett and his works but maybe the best approach is to sit back and enjoy his haunting use of words and imagery and laugh/cry at the absurdity of Winnie's, and our, situation.

Simon Thomas
Director

THE PLAYWRIGHT

Samuel Barclay Beckett was born, "astride a grave", (his words) on the 13th May 1906 of solid bourgeois protestant stock in Dublin. Educated at Portora Royal School and Trinity College Dublin where he excelled at rugby and cricket and graduated with an M.A. degree. He went on to lecture in English at the École Normale Supérieure College in Paris (1928 - 30) afterwards returning to his old college, Trinity, in Dublin to lecture in French.

His love of France and Paris in particular enticed him to return in 1932 and he lived there for the rest of his life. Arriving back he soon found himself in the midst of the literary avant-garde. It was here he met another Irish exile - James Joyce - who eventually became an intimate friend and as a writer, a powerful influence. He began by writing journalistic articles, short stories, novellas and poems in French and English, but it was his novels 'Murphy' (1938) 'Wait' (1944) and 'Malone Dies' (1956) that established him as a writer with unique gifts.

His first play 'En Attendant Godot' written in 1952 as 'a relaxation from the awful prose I was writing at the time', astonished critics and audiences alike and he was persuaded to translate it into English. Peter Hall quickly realized its potential and produced it at the Arts Theatre in 1954. The rest, as they say, is history. Thereafter he wrote plays of infinite variety extending the areas of theatrical expression undreamed of by most other playwrights. Testimonies are 'Endgame' (1957), 'Krapp's Last Tape' (1959) and the play you will see tonight, 'Happy Days' (1961).

He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969 and was made a Companion of Literature in 1984. He died in Paris in 1989 at the age of 83.

Ken Ratcliffe

HAPPY DAYS

by Samuel Beckett

First performance of this production 18 May 2002

CAST

WINNIE Anne Neville

WILLIE John Dobson

Act 1: 50 minutes, Act 2: 26 minutes

There will be one interval of 15 minutes

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Simon Thomas
Designer	John Horwood
Stage Manager	Mark Ayres
Lighting Designer	Tim Hayward
Sound Designer/ Assistant Lighting Designer	Tim Hart
Construction	John Horwood
Special Effects	Mark Ayres, with thanks to Pennicott and Payne Ltd
Set painting	Karen Tollady
Costume	Lindsay Udell
Lighting/Sound Operators	James Carr-Saunders, Tim Hart, Jason Armstrong
Assistant Stage Managers	Fran Apprich, Natalie Taylor, Emily de Cosimo
Wig provided by	Julia Cruttenden of Greasepaint
With thanks to	Rebecca Vincent, Nigel Bamford, Jon Webster, Eric Lister, Alex Marker, Martin Choules

COMING SOON

THE MADNESS OF GEORGE III by Alan Bennett

In **The Playhouse**, 7th - 15th June

For reasons unknown even to the best physicians in the king's service, His Majesty's personal plumbing is malfunctioning. In fact, his water seems to have turned an alarming shade of blue. What's worse, the King's physical infirmities seem to have spread to his brain, his behaviour becoming increasingly more eccentric until everyone is forced to agree, with the prompting of his debauched scheming son, that he has lost his mind. This is a riotous comedy full of hilarious bawdy physical comedy, balanced by moments of touching intimacy.

PLAYHOUSE CREATURES by April De Angelis

In **The Studio**, 15th - 29th June

April De Angelis has taken the lives of five famous actresses, some of the first on the English stage, and created a funny, gutsy, bawdy comedy. It moves between their backstage and onstage lives as they deal with unpredictable lovers, fickle audiences, the pressures of performance and the painful gap between their private hopes and public disappointments. What are the roles that women play and who has the power to assign them?

THE 55th STUDENT GROUP presents

TIME AND THE CONWAYS by J.B. Priestley

In **The Playhouse**, 13th - 21st July

British journalist, novelist, playwright, and essayist. Priestley's output was vast and varied - he wrote over one hundred novels, plays, and essays, and is best known as the author of the novel *The Good Companions*. *Time and the Conways* is one of several of his works on the subject of time, others being *An Inspector Calls*, *I Have Been Here Before* and *Dangerous Corner*. It is a hugely entertaining and fascinating look at the way time affects a single family, the Conways, told through the device of moving back and forward in time.

ART EXHIBITION

In the Foyer

11th May - 3rd June

An exhibition of watercolours

by John Flemons

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I/We wish to apply for membership of The Questors Theatre.
BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Name(s)

Address

.....

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Tel. no.

e-mail

Date of Birth

Membership Type *(please tick one)*

- | | |
|---|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | £39.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint | £71.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concessionary
Senior Citizens, UB40s, Leisure Pass holders | £23.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Concessionary | £39.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Family
One adult and all children under 17 | £47.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Family
Two adults and all children under 17
<i>(please include names and dates of birth of all children for both types of family membership)</i> | £81.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student
All tickets at half price on production of NUS card - no free shows | £13.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate
For those outside a 25-mile radius of The Questors - no free shows | £15.00 |

Where did you hear about The Questors?.....

- I enclose a cheque/postal order payable to The Questors Ltd. for £.....
- I would like to pay by Credit Card - Mastercard / Visa.

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Signed Date

NEW MEMBERS TICK SHEET

Many members join just to see the shows. However, if you want to get more involved, please tick the areas you are interested in below. Remember that experience isn't always necessary.

- Acting**
You will need to take an audition to join the acting company.
Please fill in a form (available from the office).
- Directing**
You will need either a proven track record or hands-on theatre experience for this.
- Backstage**
Including stage management, construction, lighting, sound, props, and wardrobe.
- Design**
Set and/or costume design
- Front of House**
Including stewarding, box office, programme selling, Questors café.
- Publicity**
Leaflet distribution, open day etc.
- Photography**
Experience and own camera required.
- Grapevine Bar**
Bar staff.
- Envelope Stuffing**
Daytime - including general office help.
- Maintenance**
Any + every odd job.

Details of any relevant experience:

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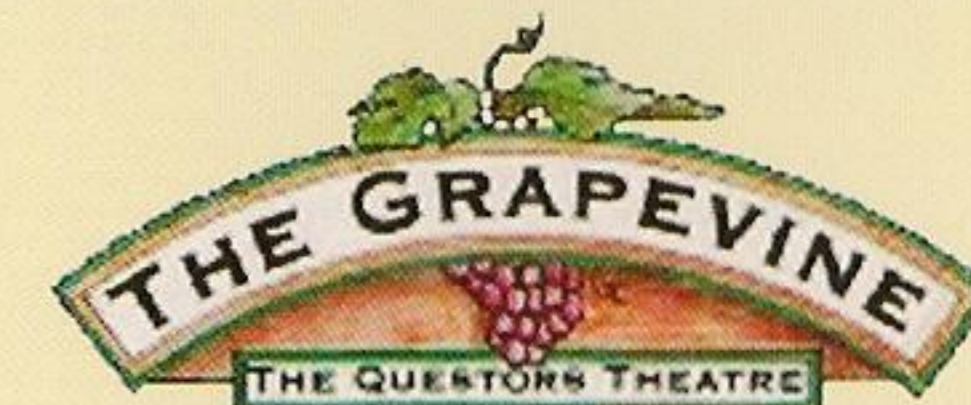
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Worldwide Flights

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£25 off every booking
over £500 for
Questors Members



WORTH CROSSING EALING FOR!

For your interval or after show drinks visit the friendly and comfortable Grapevine Bar. It's open seven nights a week and Sunday lunchtimes. We pride ourselves on the quality of our cask ales, which usually include Fuller's London Pride, Fuller's Chiswick Bitter and a guest ale. We also provide a range of draft lagers and ciders as well as wines and spirits - all at very reasonable prices.

www.myfavouritepub.com/questors